

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 and 14-34 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wu (US 6027375) in view of Davis et al. (US 5295843). The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

In regard to independent claim 26, it appears that the examiner has not properly examined the claim, or at least has not complied with MPEP §707, because the examiner has not provided notification of the reasons for rejection (such as page(s) or paragraph(s) in the references). More specifically, the examiner has not commented about the features of claim 26 and where the features are suggested in the cited art. Nowhere in the cited art is there a disclosure or suggestion of a plug receiving area which is sized and shaped to receive a plurality of USB plugs with signal contact supporting decks of two of the plugs being located vertically aligned relative to each other and power contact supporting sections of the two plugs being at least partially laterally adjacent each other. The examiner is requested to issue a new office action which complies with 37 CFR §1.104(c)(2) and MPEP §707, and which addresses independent claim 26.

In regard to claim 29, it also appears that the examiner has not properly examined this claim, or at least has not complied with MPEP §707, because the examiner has not provided notification of the reasons for rejection (such as page(s) or paragraph(s) in the references). More specifically, the examiner has not commented about the features of claim 29 and where the features are suggested in the cited art. Nowhere in the cited art is there a disclosure or suggestion of a plug

receiving area with two receiving area sections that are adapted to receive two plugs and wherein at least one of the receiving area sections is sized and shaped to alternatively receive a third electrical plug having a signal contact supporting deck, but not having a power contact section. The examiner has not explained where the features of claim 29 are disclosed or suggested in the cited art. The examiner is requested to issue a new office action which complies with 37 CFR §1.104(c)(2) and MPEP §707, and which addresses independent claim 29.

Claim 1 has been amended above to clarify applicants' claimed invention. In particular, claim 1 recites that in each receiving area the signal contacts are located along only a first one of the sides and the power contacts are located along only a second one of the sides opposite the first side. In Davis et al. the socket has both signal contacts 4 and power contacts 6 on a bottom side of the divider 7 in the passage 26, and signal contacts 5 and power contacts 6 on the top side of the divider 7 in the passage. There is no disclosure or suggestion of one side having only signal contacts and the opposite side having only power contacts. Thus, the suggestion to combine Davis et al with Wu merely would result in Wu having two plug receiving areas; each receiving area having power contacts and signal contacts on both opposing sides similar to Davis et al. Claim 1, on the other hand, calls for each receiving area having the signal contacts located along only a first one of the sides and the power contacts located along only a second one of the sides opposite the first side. This is not disclosed or suggested

in the cited art. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though dependent claims 2-10 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claim 11 has been amended to clarify applicants' claimed invention. In particular, claim 11 now recites that the power contacts extend into the two receiving areas only from the housing section and the signal contacts extend into the receiving areas only along sides of the receiving areas opposite the housing section. Similar to the explanation given above with respect to claim 1, the suggestion to combine Davis et al with Wu merely would result in Wu having two plug receiving areas; each receiving area having power contacts and signal contacts on both opposing sides similar to Davis et al. Claim 11, on the other hand, recites that the power contacts extend into the two receiving areas only from the housing section and the signal contacts extend into the receiving areas only along sides of the receiving areas opposite the housing section. The features of claim 11 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 11 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though dependent claims 12 and 14-17 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 11. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claim 18 has been amended above to clarify applicants' claimed invention. In particular, claim 18 recites that signal contacts in the first receiving area are located along only the first side and the power contacts in the first receiving area are located along only the second side. Similar to that stated above with respect to claim 1, in Davis et al. the socket has both signal contacts 4 and power contacts 6 on a bottom side of the divider 7 in the passage 26, and signal contacts 5 and power contacts 6 on the top side of the divider 7 in the passage 26. There is no disclosure or suggestion of one side having only signal contacts and the opposite side having only power contacts. Thus, the suggestion to combine Davis et al with Wu merely would result in Wu having two plug receiving areas; each receiving area having power contacts and signal contacts on both opposing sides similar to Davis et al. Claim 18, on the other hand, recites that signal contacts in the first receiving area are located along only the first side and the power contacts in the first receiving area are located along only the second side. The features of claim 18 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable and should be allowed.

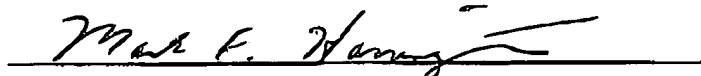
Though dependent claims 19-25 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 18. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claim 34 has been amended to clarify applicants' claimed invention. In particular, claim 34 now recites that the conductors on the supporting deck comprise the first side

having only signal conductors and the second side having only power conductors. The features recited in claim 34 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Davis et al merely discloses both sides of the divider 7 having both signal contacts 4, 5 and power contacts 6. There is no disclosure or suggestion of the divider 7 having power contacts on only one side and signal contacts on only the other side. Nor is there a suggestion of applicants' claimed invention from a combination of Wu and Davis et al. Therefore, claim 34 is patentable and should be allowed.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' Attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,


Mark F. Harrington (Reg. No. 31,686)

4/29/03
Date

Customer No.: 29683
Harrington & Smith, LLP
4 Research Drive
Shelton, CT 06484-6212
203-925-9400

FAX RECEIVED

APR 29 2003

TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800